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PROCEEDINGS

RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

Parochial Councils of Charity

IN THE UNION, AND CHARITY ORGANISATION DISTRICT, OF

ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE,

IN FEBRUARY, MARCH, AND APRIL, 1871;

BEING:

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CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE INCUMBENTS OF THE DISTRICT PARISHES IN THE UNION.

28, Mount Street, Grosvenor Square,
February 8, 1871.

Reverend Sir,—In accordance with a resolution of the St. George's Committee for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity, I have the honour to enclose copies of suggestions for the improvement of the mode of administering relief in the various districts comprised in the Parishes of St. George's, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret's and St. John's, Westminster. I venture to request that you will give these suggestions your most careful consideration, and will consult on the subject your district visitors and such of your parishioners as are interested in improving the condition of the poor.

The St. George's Committee has now been in existence for upwards of twelve months, and its principal work has been the investigation of the cases of applicants for relief. In the three parishes more than 2,000 cases have been carefully inquired into, registered, and, in many instances, assisted in a manner calculated to do permanent good. The result of the experience thus acquired is, that the greatest care is required in the minute investigation of every case, and in the application of sound principles of administering relief. The Committee are now of opinion that the time has come to endeavour to give these principles a more extended application.

I therefore earnestly invite your attendance at a Conference of all the incumbents of the various districts within our sphere of operations, to be held at the Board-room of the Union, Mount-street, on the 16th day of March, 1871, at three o'clock. Time will thus be allowed for all to give this important subject that consideration which I cannot but think it so much requires, and I trust that a meeting of those who have so great experience will produce a beneficial result.

In the event of your being unavoidably prevented from attending yourself, the Committee trust that you will nominate one of your clergy or parishioners to represent you on this occasion, so that the collective opinion of all may be arrived at.

As bearing on this question, I beg to enclose a report of our Central Council on House-to-house Visitation, together with a pamphlet containing extracts from the report of the Edinburgh Association, which has achieved such important results in this direction.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

WESTMINSTER, Chairman.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS,

With a View to the Improvement of the Administration of Charitable Relief in the Parishes of St. George, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster.

1. That a Relief Committee be formed in each Ecclesiastical District. The Incumbent (or a layman, if the Incumbent prefer it) to be Chairman, and the Members to consist of the Clergy, District Visitors, and other persons who may be elected. This Committee to meet at stated times for the formation of general rules, but to appoint from among its Members a Relief Sub-Committee, which shall meet three times a-week, or oftener if necessary, to discuss and deal with all cases proposed for relief in the District.

2. That the District Visitors shall, in future, except in very urgent cases, on no account give, even at their own expense, any relief without the previous sanction of the Relief Sub-Committee. In a very urgent case, the circumstances under which relief may have been given shall be reported at once to the Sub-Committee.

3. That the District Visitors shall, when cases come under their notice which appear to them suitable for relief, prepare a statement of the circumstances which seem to render assistance necessary, for the consideration of the Relief Sub-Committee, and shall afterwards administer such relief as may be authorised.

4. That one of the Members of the Committee be appointed to act as Honorary Secretary, to keep a record of the cases relieved, and the various sums expended.

It is hoped that the following results may attend the adoption of this plan :—

1. That a uniform system of relief, not only throughout each ecclesiastical district, but throughout the whole area of the three parishes, will be arrived at.

2. That a larger number of the laity may be induced to join in the work of endeavouring to improve permanently the condition of the poor.

3. That relief will be administered in a wiser and more discriminating manner by a Committee in which the persons of most experience will acquire the most influence, rather than by the unequal, and comparatively unaided skill of the different District Visitors.

4. That there will be a cessation of those small doles which (with the best intentions) have often been hitherto given to undeserving persons, or to those who should be too independent to receive them, and who, by getting them, lose self-reliance and habits of providence. The really suitable cases will receive more substantial relief.



5. That the District Visitors, being no longer associated in the minds of the poor with the "dropping of tickets," will stand in a more satisfactory position, and will be able to devote their energies to assisting the poor by their influence and advice, and to raising their moral condition, with better prospects of success.

The main feature of the scheme consists in the entire stopping of all relief other than that administered according to the most intelligent system, and in the best manner that can be devised.

If some such plan as is here sketched out were put in operation, the St. George's Committee of the Charity Organisation Society would be prepared, on the invitation of the Local Committees, to detail one or more of its members to serve on each Local Relief Sub-Committee, and thus secure co-operation between the Local Charities and the Society, which it is hoped would produce the most beneficial results. The St. George's Committee would also use its best endeavours to procure from the richer portions of the three parishes the services of District Visitors for those districts where there are comparatively few residents who can undertake such work, and would entertain the question of assisting with grants of money those Local Committees which, in very poor districts, may urgently need funds. The services of the Inquiry Officers of the St. George's Committee would be available, when requested, for the investigation of cases in which their experience might be of value, and the circumstances of which District Visitors may be unable themselves to ascertain.

It is sincerely hoped that thus a cordial co-operation may be established among all Societies and individuals interested in the welfare of the poor.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE CLERGY AND LAITY.

THE SECRETARY read a letter from the Marquis of Westminster, as follows:—

The Marquis of
WESTMINSTER.

“Eaton, Chester, March 15.

“Dear Captain Fitzroy,—I have not been very well lately, and shall not, I am afraid, be able, in consequence, to be in London to-morrow to attend the Conference at three o'clock. I am very sorry to have to write an excuse instead. The Society is one of very great importance for the progress of the organisation of charitable relief, and I sincerely hope the meeting may be convinced of the great importance of combination and co-operation in the work of relieving those, *and those only*, who may be found to be deserving of it, and of doing this on a regular system, such as our Committee proposes.

“There are many members on our Committee more fully qualified than myself to preside on the occasion, from their practical experience in the working of our Society, after many days and years of hard work in the office.

“I am sorry not to be able to be present, and be kind enough to say so from me.

“Very truly yours,

“WESTMINSTER.”

It was moved and seconded and carried unanimously, that Sir Charles Trevelyan take the chair.

Sir CHARLES
TREVELYAN.

CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is greatly to be regretted that the Marquis of Westminster, who has been such a consistent and liberal supporter of this cause, is not able to preside over the meeting.

I must crave your indulgence, for I was to have taken a much humbler place. As it is considered best that I should still move the second resolution, which had been intrusted to me, I will begin by reading it. It is to this effect: “That, in order to commence with any hope of success the great work of elevating the character, and improving the condition of this pauperised and demoralised population, it is indispensable that the laity of every religious persuasion should come to the aid of the clergy.”

In moving this resolution I feel as if we were for the first time brought face to face with our task. The most unsettled and questionable part of the population of these

islands and of the neighbouring countries have for centuries poured into this great metropolis. And what are the influences they are here subjected to? The absence of all proper sanitary conditions—overcrowding, insufficient ventilation, insufficient distribution of water. Room, air, water—the indispensable means of health—all wanting. Then there are the usual temptations and corruptions incident to all great towns; and, more especially, our national vice of drunkenness, that pest of this country, is pandered to in this metropolis beyond any other place—(hear, hear)—and it is remarkable that the parts of the metropolis where the greatest facilities are afforded for indulgence in this vice are those very parts from which the most urgent appeals come for charitable relief.

Then there is the Poor Law. You will, perhaps, think it strange that I should name the Poor Law among the pauperising influences of the metropolis; but out-door relief is administered in London in a mode at once indiscriminate and insufficient, and the consequence is that it is regarded by all parties as a licence to beg.

Then comes the abuse of charity, which exists to an unprecedented extent. But this part of the subject I will leave to those who will follow me.

The general result is that we have in London a large population physically deteriorated and morally depraved, living, not by honest labour, but by preying upon society in some shape or other, from the common mendicant to the housebreaker.

The Charity Organisation Society was established for the purpose of counteracting, as far as possible, these great evils. The principle of centralisation, and the principle of local administration, are combined in the constitution of the Society. The metropolis is divided into districts, in each of which there is a Committee composed of the clergy, the guardians of the poor, the leading members of the charitable societies, and the representatives of the benevolent public generally; and there is a Central Council composed of delegations from all the District Committees. The Society has had all the success that could have been expected in the time; the different charities have been to a certain extent organised; a considerable check has been given to mendicancy; and a number of cases have been relieved which were capable of being dealt with on the principle of restoring the persons assisted to a state of

self-respect and self-support, the chronic and dishonest cases having been left to the operation of the Poor Law.

In this state of things it has appeared to the Committee of your district that the time has come for an aggressive, forward movement—for, although we may, for the present, retain our name of a Society for Organising Charity, the time is approaching when the Society ought to be distinctly recognised as one *for improving the condition of the poor*; for raising them from their lapsed, dependent condition; and making them, as far as possible, honest, self-supporting labourers. Although the flame has, in some degree, been kept under, the fire is smouldering below, ready to break out at any time. Although his excursions have been checked, the enemy is still entrenched in his stronghold.

How, then, is this contest to be brought to a successful issue? By bringing the educated intelligence of this great metropolis into close connexion with its ignorance; its benevolence with its misery; its wealth with its poverty—subject always to proper conditions; or, translated into practical language, by establishing a sound principle of house-to-house visitation among the poor. Everything else would follow from this.

It is greatly to the honour of our clergy that, as they took the lead in the education of the people, so, in this part of London at least, they have initiated this movement also; and in the twenty-one parishes into which this district is divided, a system of house-to-house visitation has been more or less established. As the trustees of our national religious endowments, and still more as the depositaries of the purity of our faith, the clergy are our natural leaders in this good work. Everybody who has read Macaulay's History will remember how he describes the superior cultivation and liberality of the London clergy. The country clergy have since greatly improved; but the London clergy have also advanced, and have fully maintained their relative position. At a recent meeting of this Society at Chelsea I heard a clergyman discourse on the difference between true and false charity, and the educational influence of true charity, in a manner which delighted me. And in October last, the Rev. A. W. Thorold, Vicar of St. Pancras, spoke as follows at the Church Congress at Southampton, on the Organisation of Charitable Relief in its Relation to Church Work:—

“It is a fair question for discussion how far it would be for the advantage of all concerned if we could be altogether

relieved of these duties. I only hope our lay brethren will speak out their minds now that they have the chance; and it is indeed a pity if we cannot listen to their advice once a-year, when they have to listen to ours once a-week. For this, at any rate, we may feel sure of—that you do not wish us to forget our ordination vows, nor to become mere men of the cloister and library—a kind of painted figure-head to ornament a vessel's bow, but not to steer her; nay, that you like us the better when we are strong all round; and that, recognising our obligation to discharge all the duties involved in our office, whether we like them or not, you are not so unjust as to identify habits of business with a worldly or unspiritual mind. Yet may the day soon come when in every English parish, of a size to require it, there shall be a recognised Church body, to be the incumbent's parliament and the poor man's brotherhood; when we can really begin to believe that private relief may be given without encouraging improvidence, and that the five millions now said to be bestowed among the English poor of London alone shall not smother, but stimulate their life."

But I can refer you to higher authority than Mr. Thorold's. "It is not reason that we"—the Apostles—"should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men [this was addressed to the laity] of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But *we* will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the world." I conceive, with submission to the many excellent clergymen I see around me, that the truth thus enunciated by the Apostles applies as much now, in London, as it did in those days; and if the clergy were relieved of the ordinary secular business connected with charity, they would be able to apply themselves with greater energy to the spiritual ministrations which specially belong to them. God forbid that I should be supposed to advocate the divorcement of charity from religion. What I advocate is the divorcement of charity from the sympathetic weakness which, by encouraging the undeserving, turns charity into a demoralising influence. I advocate this, that charity should be divorced from the great mistake of endeavouring to make proselytes from one Christian persuasion to another. I contend that charity should be divorced from hypocrisy. Our Saviour, Christ, in His administration of charity, laid great stress on that point: "Ye seek me, not

because ye saw the miracles, *but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.*" I will not attempt to improve upon that.

Your District Committee, composed of all classes of the community, clergy, guardians of the poor, nonconformist ministers, members of the public services (the military service is ably represented in it), and numerous members of the other professions, mercantile men, bankers, and so forth, invite the clergy to co-operate with them, or rather, I should say, they offer themselves as helpers of the clergy to act according to such rules as may be determined upon; and they propose a joint committee of the clergy and laity to prepare those rules. So anxious are they to avoid imposing any trammels upon the clergy, that they do not propose that these rules should be obligatory, but merely that they should be recommended to the clergy and charitable people of all classes within the respective parishes, to be adopted with any modifications upon which they may determine.

I have already read the resolution proposed for your acceptance, and I thank you for the kind attention with which you have listened to my remarks.

Rev. J. H. HAMILTON. The Rev. J. H. HAMILTON, Vicar of St. Michael's, Chester-square: I rise to second the resolution proposed by the Chairman. And I do so with thankfulness that this Committee has at length been brought together, and that it is founded upon principles which afford a fair promise of success.

Some of you may remember what is told of Dr. Chalmers, that, when preparing his book on the "Christian and Civil Economy of Large Towns," he made it his business to examine the working of the Poor Law in various towns and agricultural districts of England, and the conviction which this investigation forced upon his mind was that "the Poor Law was dragging down England to her grave." That was his conclusion from the operation of the Poor Law as it was then administered, and had the law not been amended, his foreboding must have proved true. But the new Poor Law, based on Mr. Chadwick's report, however harsh it may have seemed in some respects, arrested the evil which was then rapidly increasing, and for some years checked the growth of pauperism. At the same time, the principles which Dr. Chalmers had taught.

with a truly Christian spirit and the most persuasive eloquence, gradually informed the public mind upon the true method of relieving distress, and have ever since been working their way in the country at large. It is in harmony with these principles that the present movement for placing charitable relief on a sounder basis has taken place.

When the new Poor Law was introduced, many years ago, I had the opportunity of observing its working in a large country parish with many poor, of which I was then the incumbent. It certainly was a great improvement upon the old law. But since that time it appears to have been more and more relaxed, till the expenditure has become greater than ever. Within the last four years the expense of the poor in London has increased by fifty-six per cent. This is indeed a deplorable fact, while in the same short period the wealth of the country has been everywhere increasing, and there has been and still is an enormous demand for labour. Yes, the pace of pauperism has so increased, that it will, if not checked, bring about that result which Dr. Chalmers anticipated from the law as it then stood. It is perhaps a harsh thing to say, but the efforts of the benevolent have gone far to aggravate this evil. (Hear, hear.) I have seen a good deal of this kind of charity. It is distressing beyond measure to see the injudicious manner in which money is lavished upon begging-letter writers and other persons who are for the most part impostors. You cannot exaggerate the amount of mischief done in that way. The mendicant is encouraged, and the honest labourer discouraged. The poor honest man sees his worthless neighbour living in luxury on the contributions of the wealthy, whilst he can barely earn a subsistence for his family. That is a thing that ought not to be. (Hear, hear.)

The Poor Law, applying itself only to relief, does not exercise any influence to raise the labouring man to self-respect, nor to help him forward to work for the support of his family. It is absolutely inoperative for that purpose. It has no tendency to raise and elevate the character and improve the condition of the pauperised and demoralised portion of the population.

The benevolence lavished upon the poor by visitors is another way of producing the same result. I do not think I ever saw a person receive for a few weeks charity of this kind without being paralysed as to personal effort. (Hear,

hear.) He rapidly sinks into a state of apathy and becomes dead to every better motive.

I feel that, under these circumstances, it is most important, on the one hand, to separate the visitation of the poor from the administration of relief; and, on the other, to provide that relief by a distinct agency for the purpose. I believe that to be the first principle of all sound societies for the benefit of the poor, such as that at Edinburgh and other places, which have worked with so much success in this good cause.

The next principle to be considered is, that there should be a district visitor to every ten or twelve families of those who are in a condition to require the help of those above them. But who is to undertake this office? In a London parish, containing many hundred families, it is plainly impossible for a clergyman to visit all. But, even if it were possible for the clergy to do it, it would be most undesirable that they should. The administration of charitable relief is that which breaks down our spirits, exhausts our energies, and distracts our minds from the higher and nobler objects of our care; and although we are not to forget that we are the servants of Him who went about doing good both to the body and soul, yet we ought not to be called upon to do more than to lay down the principles of Christian almsgiving, to remind our people of these principles, to minister to the requirements of the sick and afflicted amongst our flocks, and to carry out the other work of our office which properly devolves upon us. But the duty of rendering help and sympathy to our brethren belongs equally to all the members of Christ's Church, whether lay or clerical. This great principle is laid down in that source of all instruction, both in regard to principles and conduct—the Holy Scriptures. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." As in the natural body, so it is in the spiritual body of Christ, the Church. What is the Christian Church but one large family, in which every individual is so bound up with all the rest, that he must feel a deep interest in their well-being?

Accordingly, all who can, should devote some portion of their time to visiting their poorer brethren, in order to show a real, unaffected interest in their welfare, to speak a word in season in all the varied circumstances of their

family life, to encourage them under trials, and afford such help as may enable them to rise out of the depths of dependence and improvidence and vice, in which so many are now sunk. Visits of this kind will infallibly tend to produce a wholesome effect. It is not in nature that men or women should be receiving the disinterested ministrations of one above them, particularly if a layman (who they feel is not paid for his services), without gratitude; that they should see a man sacrificing a portion of his time regularly, by visiting from house to house and there acting as their counsellor and friend, looking after the education of their children, and rendering them such services as it is always in the power of a superior to bestow on an inferior; they cannot experience all this without great benefit to their character and habits. It must tend to create in them that feeling of self-respect and desire for improvement which we all desire them to possess. A layman is more fitted for all these things than a clergyman by his greater knowledge of business and wider experience of life. And if the work is to be thoroughly done, it is indispensable that every gentleman who can should come to the aid of the clergy, and I would earnestly desire and pray to see all religious bodies unite in one great effort thus to do good to their poor neighbours. In such a combination there could be no real difficulty.

It was pitiful to see the miserable obstructions thrown in the way of the Education Act by the petty squabbles about the "religious difficulty," as they called it. There really was no such difficulty, as appeared when the subject was fairly grappled with. Nor need there be any more difficulty here. All sects and denominations may combine in this work, without any compromise of their particular opinions.

I remember one stormy day in winter, coming home through a field, I saw a sheep "cast" into a very deep ditch. I ran, forgetting the weight of the animal, and, sliding down the bank, endeavoured to pull him out. Of course I found myself powerless to do it. So I looked out for help, and beckoned to two men at a distance, who promptly turned out of their way and hastened to my assistance. One of them was a Baptist, and the other a recent convert to Romanism. They were certainly characters with whom I should not have been ready to associate in my parish, but I did not on that account decline

their help. I said, "Come, now, let us save this animal." We jumped down together into the ditch, all three laid hold of the struggling creature, and, with one great effort, drew it out of the mud, in which it would soon have perished, and put it on its legs safe upon the bank. The principles of the three agents were different, but we combined in the object of saving a neighbour's sheep. Why should we not combine to save Christ's sheep, that are wandering from the right way, and bring them into the path of uprightness, apart from the pure abstract doctrines of religion? It is not necessary that every one should agree with us in every point of doctrine in order to join with us cordially in this great work of benevolence. We, the clergy, should be happy to have the laity co-operating with us in it. We are not called upon to give it up altogether ourselves. (Hear, hear.) We shall, of course, be ready to minister, where we can, to the relief of the poor; but that is a very different thing from carrying it out in the wholesale way in which it has been done. If we can get ladies and gentlemen to aid us we shall be most happy. Ladies are most essential, I conceive, for the due and complete performance of this good work. (Hear, hear.) And if we can get a lady or gentleman to visit every ten or twelve families (never more to each), and thus provide for the visitation of the whole parish, we shall have the machinery desired. Call the labourers thus associated by any name you please—committee, or society, &c.—one in each of the ecclesiastical districts and subdivisions of St. George, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster, and all communicating with the central office—we shall thus have uniformity introduced, and not have one going after another into the same house, and persons obtaining relief in half-a-dozen places, which is at present too commonly the case.

Under the circumstances I may leave, very safely, a great deal that has yet to be said upon this resolution to those who are to follow me. Upon the few principles I have mentioned I think it will be acknowledged that a right system of administering relief may be founded, so as not to demoralise the objects of it, but to effect great and substantial good.

CHAIRMAN: I will now, with your permission, put the resolution for the adoption of the meeting; but we should first be glad to hear any gentleman who wishes to make

any remark on the points on which the mover and seconder have said their say.

The Rev. BRYMER BELCHER, Vicar of St. Gabriel's, Warwick-square: I did not know that you were speaking on the second resolution. I should like to say a few words on it. I presume the resolution is intended to ask the assistance of laymen?

The Rev. BRYMER BELCHER.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is so.

The Rev. BRYMER BELCHER: There are very few clergymen who have not the assistance of ladies in their parishes. I may observe, in passing, that the clergy and the district visitors are spoken of in a somewhat curious way. It is in the third result that is mentioned as likely to follow the suggestions for the formation of local organisations. It is this:—

“3. That relief will be administered in a wiser and more discriminating manner by a committee in which the persons of most experience will acquire the most influence, rather than by the unequal and comparatively unaided skill of the different district visitors.”

I confess we were rather at a loss to understand how we should benefit largely from the introduction of laymen. We do not think that the district visitors deserve to be spoken of as giving relief in an unequal and comparatively unaided way. No clergyman can have any objection to be assisted by laymen. My district, however, differs from others in the parish. Very few men in my district have any time to give to the work, as we have not many rich. I am, therefore, obliged to depend on the assistance of the ladies, of whom I have a very large staff. We allot ten or twelve families to each, and we flatter ourselves we do not succeed badly. I regret the words “pauperised and demoralised population.” I presume it is meant only to apply to a segment of the whole; but, as it stands, it applies to the whole; and I must hold up my hand against adjectives of that sort being applied to the whole.

CHAIRMAN: There was no intention of characterising the whole of the population of the metropolis, but only a particular part, as being demoralised and pauperised; and it was far from being our intention to cast any reflection on Mr. Belcher's district visitors. Few clergymen, however, will deny that most ladies, especially young ladies, find it very difficult to avoid giving doles to the poor. It is to

enable them to visit the poor, without being liable to that kind of pressure, that the resolution was framed.

The Rev. BRYMER BELCHER: I do not quite understand the last words of the resolution. Is it intended that the words "of every religious persuasion" should be added after the word "clergy," so as to make it read, "should come to the aid of the clergy of every religious persuasion?"

CHURCHILL.

Lord ALFRED CHURCHILL: After the very able addresses delivered before us, I should be very sorry to put any unnecessary question. I wish thoroughly to indorse the views of the seconder of the motion as to the evils of the present Poor-law system. I think that the method of administering relief to the poor is faulty to a degree. There is a very large amount of pauperism in this town, amounting to from 120,000 to 150,000 souls daily in receipt of charitable relief, and it is to alleviate this that the Poor Law gives that indiscriminate relief—that out-door relief—which is the cause of so much pauperism and demoralisation. The work done by the boards of guardians is very great, but I know from experience that they have their whole time occupied in attending committees and that sort of thing, and this is the cause why the primary duty of administering relief is not looked after with the discrimination that it ought to be. Relieving officers are not supplied in sufficient numbers, and have not the sense of responsibility that they would have if a number of ladies and gentlemen were looking after the poor in the different districts. I believe that it is quite necessary to combine the lay with the clerical element for the purpose of properly investigating the circumstances of every poor family. I think that can best be done by means of house-to-house visitation, and that the visitors should not have too many families on their hands, and should not themselves administer relief without first obtaining the sanction of a superintending committee. (Hear, hear.) These lady visitors go round the districts with the best intentions, but they are liable to be imposed upon. (Hear, hear.) If they were not to afford relief then and there, but were to report as to the relief proposed to be given, I think you might then be able to put a stop to much of the injury inflicted on the poor by practised impostors. There is the clerical element and the lay element in the Church, and the onus is as much upon the one as upon the other. It is the duty of the lay element to help in the investigation of every

case requiring relief. I do not care whether they are members of the Established Church, or Nonconformists, or Roman Catholic priests; they ought all to unite together upon the question of the administration of charity. It is a question on which we may all meet upon broad ground, and with a desire to simply endeavour to meet the difficulties incident to it.

The Rev. WILLIAM GILL, Minister of Robert-street Chapel, Grosvenor-square, said: I have had the honour, as a Nonconformist minister, to receive an invitation to attend this Conference, and it gives me pleasure to say a few words in support of the present resolution. For many years it has been my privilege to labour in the cause of Christian civilisation among the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, and until lately I had no idea that so much ignorance and distress existed in this West-end of London as I now find. It appears to me that nothing can be more important in the matter of relief than that ministers and laity of every religious persuasion should unite in an organisation of the kind now contemplated, to meet the necessities of the case. I would remind the Conference that every Nonconformist congregation has organisations consisting of lay agents, male and female, for the purpose of aiding, as far as in their power, the wants of the sick and the poor. My own church has its house-to-house visitors, its Dorcas and Maternal Societies, and its Benevolent Society. Large numbers of cases relieved by these societies are not only not connected with our own Church, but with no Church at all. We feel that their misery and distress constitute their claim upon our charity, and accordingly we relieve them. But our difficulty is, that we frequently find that these very same persons are being relieved by the charities of visitors from one, two, or more Churches in the district. Now I apprehend it is the object of the proposed Committee to meet this difficulty. If, therefore, you contemplate inviting the co-operation of Nonconformists in devising the best method of so giving relief as to do away with the evils of the present isolated systems, I am quite sure you will find both the ministers and laity of the Nonconformist Churches heartily willing to unite and to render all the practical assistance in their power. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, and in reference to the remarks of the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, about the help he once accepted from two ministers of other Churches

The Rev. W.
GILL.

than his own to get a poor sheep out of a ditch, I will venture to hope that there may be found many Nonconformists whose service of help in the relief of the poor may not only be acceptable to the clergy and laity of the Church of England, but who would be found not unworthy of being recognised by them as Christian brethren elsewhere. (Applause.)

CHAIRMAN: I have great pleasure in giving the assurance to our friend that it is fully intended to invite the co-operation in our object of ministers of the Christian religion of all denominations. Mr. Gill has given a practical illustration of the necessity for this. We propose that a Committee be appointed for the purpose of laying down the best rules for the purpose of attaining this object, with the result, we hope, "that a uniform system of relief, not only throughout each ecclesiastical district, but throughout the whole area of the three parishes, will be arrived at." This is the first result anticipated from the adoption of this plan.

Rev. BRYMER BELCHER: The simple alteration I suggest is as follows; "It is indispensable that the laity generally should give their assistance to the clergy and ministers of all denominations."

Rev. W. GILL: The objection seems to be to my being called a clergyman. In America I should be—but perhaps it would be better not to press it. (Hear, hear.) I should not have raised the question. (Hear, hear.) Here I am not usually called a clergyman, but a Nonconformist minister.

Mr. FLEMING.

Mr. FLEMING, Guardian of the Poor: I would say one word upon this resolution, as a very humble member of the Board of Guardians. I believe the Poor-law system to be both costly and cumbrous, and that it is desirable for the laity to come forward and help. You would hardly credit it, that in so large a parish as this, where there are so many men of "idle intelligence," so large a number of poor should be waiting for relief which the Guardians cannot administer. We shall never get this sort of thing corrected if we do not expose it. I am not speaking of this as a matter of complaint against my fellow-Guardians. I do not deny that they give all the time they can to the work of their office, but I do hope that retired tradesmen, and gentlemen too, will give some portion of their time to this charitable object. There is plenty of leisure time to

give, but, strange to say, in the committee-room overhead you may have thirty or forty attending to the business of the parish, who will not come down here to attend to the real wants of the poor of the parish. I do not speak in such temperate language, perhaps, to them as I am now using. ("Hear," laughter.)

CHAIRMAN: We all know that there are many excellent persons on the Board of Guardians, and it is not their fault, but the fault of the system, if the Poor Law does not work well. I will now read the resolution amended as proposed. (Reading it.) I think we are all pretty well agreed. (Perfectly satisfied.) I will now put the resolution to the meeting. (After a show of hands.) It is passed un-animously.

The resolution so passed was as follows:—

"2. That, in order to commence, with any hope of success, the great work of elevating the character and improving the condition of this pauperised and demoralised portion of the population, it is indispensable that the laity of every religious persuasion should come to the aid of the clergy and ministers of all denominations."

Colonel FREMANTLE, of the St. George's Charity Organisation Committee, in proposing the first resolution, said: At the first commencement of the operations of the St. George's Charity Organisation Committee, about a year and a quarter ago, I was deputed to wait upon the different incumbents and ask for their co-operation, which I need hardly say I obtained, for I may remark that in no part of London have the clergy co-operated more heartily with the objects of the Society than in St. George's. My first question to the incumbents was this, "Have you sufficient funds at your disposal for the relief of the ordinary distress in your district?" The answer I received, as a general rule, was in the affirmative. The Curate in charge of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, indeed added, very naturally, that it would be a great disgrace to so wealthy a district if the contrary had been the case. The report I was able to make of the result of my interviews with the incumbents was considered very satisfactory by the Committee. I felt myself justified in saying to the Committee that they need be under no alarm lest they should establish a new relief agency in a district in which it was notorious that ample funds for the purpose already existed. I said that the

Colonel FRE-
MANTLE.

clergy had sufficient money, and that when we had inquired into a case, and had satisfied ourselves that it was a good one for relief, we had only to send the case to be dealt with satisfactorily by the local charity. But, I am sorry to say, we have been disappointed in this expectation.

What happens is this: we send a suitable case to the clergyman or agency of the district, and it generally receives a few grocery or bread tickets. We then say, "We don't want you to give bread or grocery tickets, but we want you to spend £2 or £3 or £4 upon the case," and so place the person to be relieved in a position to gain his living independently. This the local charity cannot do, and the Organising Society then gives the necessary funds for the purpose. The St. George's Committee have had the greatest difficulty to avoid becoming a *new relief society*, although they feel that every penny so spent is a confession of the bad appropriation of the large funds already spent in the district for the relief of distress. How is it that the local charity in each district cannot spend £2 or £3 when necessary upon the proper relief of a case of distress? Because a very large proportion of the funds is spent *in small doles* at the discretion of district visitors. We find that these small doles, as a general rule, tend to pauperise the recipients, and do not effect any permanent good in their condition, often the reverse; while the fact that so much money is spent in that manner cripples the resources of the charity, and prevents the really adequate relief which in certain cases is necessary to render them permanently self-supporting. There can be no manner of doubt that a very large proportion of the money devoted by benevolent persons to relieve distress in these parishes does a great deal more harm than good, and is a real misfortune to the poor.

I am a member of a branch of this Society in St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and I can state upon my personal experience that in some respects the condition of the poor in that notoriously poor district is more satisfactory than it is here. They are more self-reliant, less inclined to throw themselves upon charity instead of depending upon their own exertions—in fact they are *less demoralised by indiscriminate relief*.

We hope, if a scheme such as we propose should be adopted, that the clergy will find it an advantage to them. It will enable them in a more satisfactory manner to sepa-

rate their duties as ministers of religion and dispensers of relief. I have been told by clergymen in different parts of London that such is their desire, and I believe the feeling is very prevalent.

We think also that the district visitors would profit greatly by the change we advocate. Some few may think that they acquire influence by the power of distributing tickets at their own discretion; but we believe, on the contrary, that their influence for good among the better class of poor would be increased if their visits could be dissociated in their minds from the giving of charity. Our proposal, moreover, removes a district visitor from an unfair position; for I cannot imagine a position more unfair than that of a lady going from a comfortable house in May Fair or Belgravia into a miserable cellar or a garret, and being made at once the judge as to whether relief should be administered or not. Of course she must, and she does, give relief; and yet, in many cases, that very relief-giving without proper inquiry acts as a stimulant to the vices which have dragged down the poor family to its present degradation.

We think that the upper classes would be benefited by our scheme, for everything which interests the rich in the condition of the poor must be advantageous, and we have reason to know that many laymen, who have been for a year or more working in our committee, are ready to give their assistance to the clergy if requested to do so. And, lastly, the poor must profit by it, because the really deserving will then receive more substantial assistance; those who are notoriously undeserving—the idle, the drunken, and the dissolute—will be left face to face with hard work, or that relief to which they are entitled by law; whilst those who are simply improvident—and we fear they form a very large class—will gradually be taught to understand that they must no longer continue to earn large wages for nine months in the year, and live upon charity the other three. The resolution I have to propose is this:—

“1. That, notwithstanding the exertions of the clergy and others in this district, much of the charity that is administered has a pauperising effect; and many unworthy persons live in idleness, preying upon the kind-hearted, while the really deserving poor who do not beg are in danger of being overlooked.”

The Rev. G. H.
WILKINSON.

The Rev. G. H. WILKINSON, Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton-square: I am sure Colonel Fremantle will allow me in one point to take exception to what he has said. In St. Peter's we have acted upon the very principle he has pressed upon the attention of the meeting to-day. We have long availed ourselves of the assistance of the Society in investigating cases of relief, but we have declined to receive any portion of the money entrusted to the Committee. We have acted on the principle that any amount that was needed was to be given out of our own funds after the case was found to be a deserving one.

I do not dwell further upon the amount of mendicancy existing, as it is well known. I will only add that it is one of the greatest annoyances to the clergy to find that these imposters are preying upon the public, and that the comparatively rich receive money from the benevolent, while the poor deserving man has been left to starve. But this resolution says also that the poor are in danger of being overlooked. I have known such cases myself. In one case a man has come to see me at eight o'clock in the evening, and I have found that he was speaking the truth when he said that one cup of tea and a crust was all that he had had that day. I have seen a poor girl at a house, left alone with the corpse of her mother, but too shy to ask for help to bury her. Other cases I have known where men have asked for, and endeavoured to find, work, and I have written to people, and tried to find them work, and have been unable to do so. What we want is the help of laymen—of men full (as the Chairman said) of the Holy Ghost and wisdom—full of that love of God which enables a man, even when imposed upon, to go on striving to save the poor from degradation; men who will win others to Christ; who will, at one and the same time, relieve their bodily necessities and minister to the good of their souls; men who will imitate that Lord who, although he rebuked those who came to hear him merely for the sake of the loaves which they obtained, first drew them around him by ministering to their bodily relief.

There are difficulties, and there will be difficulties, in the way, before the Committee will be able to draw up those rules which will be required for the purpose of bringing the whole force of our religion to bear upon this work. I believe that if you are to get that concentrated patient spirit which will persevere until this great sore of London

has been healed, you must not only include in your ranks all shades of religion for the purpose of carrying on your operations, but you must so arrange that each separate religious organisation shall work in whatever way will enlist the most hearty co-operation of its members. The Roman Catholic priest, working with his Roman Catholic laity, will appeal to them, if he see fit, by their love for the Virgin. I should urge my workers to go frequently to that holy table where the strength which their work requires will specially be obtained. The Nonconformist would strengthen the hands of his workers in any way that he thought desirable. By each body of Christians working in its own way, but communicating freely and frequently with each other, the work which we all wish to effect would be most surely accomplished. I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The Rev. T. KING, Curate of St. George's, Hanover-square: I beg to protest against Colonel Fremantle's speech. He spoke in ignorance of the objects of the Saint George's Visiting Society. The Society does not profess to administer only to the temporary relief of the poor. The object of the Society is to encourage in the poor economy and self-respect, the whole of the people coming forward and giving as much money as they can. In the year 1869 our expenditure was 1,300*l*. We are encouraging industry and economy, and the great object is not merely to administer temporary relief. I object to the remarks made, and I appeal to my brother clergyman, who is present, as to the truth of what I say.

The Rev. T.
KING.

CHAIRMAN: Colonel Fremantle did not intend to make any personal remark, but merely to call attention to the general result, that there is a great deal of indiscriminate charity given.

The Rev. A. FORBES, Curate of St. Mark's, North Audley-street: Something was said in Colonel Fremantle's speech against district visitors. I must protest against their having no active part in the administration of relief. It is not right to throw any reflection upon either party. It is a most difficult subject. There is one suggestion I have to make on behalf of some of the district visitors in their own parish—that to interfere with private charity is not at all desirable.

The Rev. A.
FORBES.

Colonel FREMANTLE: I am sorry that this gentleman, or any other gentleman, should have taken any objection

to what I may have said in that respect. I thought it was better to say the truth plain out. (Hear, hear.) I meant to say it was impossible to avoid somewhat of indiscrimination in giving relief. I suppose I spoke too plain out. (It is quite true.)

The Marquis
TOWNSHEND.

The Marquis TOWNSHEND: I wish to make an amendment, and leave out the words "in danger of being" [overlooked]. It appears to me as not stating the fact, but an apprehension.

The Hon. W.-
WARREN VERNON

The Hon. W. WARREN VERNON, of the St. Giles's Charity Organisation Committee: As there seems to be some misapprehension among some reverend gentlemen as to what fell from Colonel Fremantle, I should like to explain as to lady visitors. In St. Giles-in-the-Fields the visitors are not inferior to any, but there is no doubt that the class of persons who are visited by district visitors of the Church of England are also relieved from other sources. The visitors find, after relieving cases, that the poor are also getting relief from other persons.

CHAIRMAN: With the permission of the meeting, I will now put the resolution to the vote. (After a show of hands.) Carried unanimously.

The Rev. F.
SHEPHERD.

The Rev. F. SHEPHERD, Curate of St. Stephen's, Rochester-row: In putting the third resolution to the meeting, I wish to remark that hitherto we have been discussing questions of principle, but that we must now face difficulties of constructive detail, which may account for the particular tone of the words of this resolution:—

"3. That a committee be appointed for the purpose of considering the arrangements under which suitable relief may be given in every case of need, consistently with the object of preventing cases of temporary destitution from becoming cases of permanent pauperism, and of rendering the poor, as far as possible, self-supporting and self-respecting, in general accordance with the suggestions which have been offered by the Committee of the Charity Organisation Society for the District of St. George, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster."

Now we may have needed discussion to secure agreement upon some of the questions raised in the course of our proceedings, but there is one point upon which we shall all agree without further controversy: that no one has a right to administer charity upon a demoralising

system, and then, when he gets tired of the mendicancy he has fostered, that he should be able to throw the consequences of his folly on other persons' shoulders. The Committee will therefore have to consider what remedy may be devised to prevent the steady deterioration of the poor by their habit of passing from one charitable agency to another, and whether it is possible to lay down fundamental principles according to which relief should be afforded.

Let me remind you of our present position. My life just measures the existence of the new Poor Law, and had that law been allowed to be carried out as it was designed, I might now have been witnessing the most successful scheme of modern legislation. Any one who has read the original Poor-law Reports will agree with me in admiration of the ability and care displayed in them. But the new Poor Law never had a fair chance. It was intended only for those who could live neither by charity nor industry. It was calculated to encourage industry, because no one would work in the workhouse who could work out of it. It stimulated charity by offering only such miserable living as charitable people could not allow the respectable poor to accept; and thus, through the instrumentality of the Poor Law, the land has been covered in one generation with asylums for every class of sufferers. But from the outset the new scheme was diverted from its true end. Easy philanthropists cried shame on the penurious treatment of the respectable poor in the workhouse; while ratepayers complained of the increase of luxuries to the ruffians of the casual wards. The scales have been thus flying up and down in alternations of rigour and liberality. The present fit is one of severity, and so we have a Bill in Parliament for detaining every casual a prisoner in the workhouse for three days. First of all, the Committee will have to consider whether it may not be possible to classify the poor. There is not a person here who may not come to the Poor-law door. Now reflect upon what this means—that there is no charity upon which you can count as a certainty beyond that which is offered to the lowest ruffian. You may take your chance with the charitable societies, but it is only a chance. Is this right? Is it right that a blind man, for instance, of strictly honourable life, should be sent to the same place and put on the same level as the ruffian who has brought his mother to her grave?

Now the Committee contemplates the establishment of district sub-committees, to be local authorities to which such cases as could not with any decency be referred to the Poor Law, should be submitted. You would be able to say to the respectable poor in distress, "Go to the local committee; they will assist you." On this committee you would be able to place the charitable irregulars of the district, who might give their money and services in their own way. The committee would communicate with all charitable societies of the district, and invite their attendance. Supposing the committee thus constituted, you would have a recognised body sufficiently well known to be able to command the respect and support of the neighbourhood. You would find that the subscribers to various charitable institutions would place their orders and nominations at the service of the committee, which would thus be in a position to relieve every form of deserving misfortune. On the other hand, the Poor Law would not be embarrassed with the difficulties which it can never surmount, through having to deal with two classes of poor. While, then, the Poor-law Board would address itself to the simple task of affording relief to those who dislike work, and have ceased to have any claim upon charity, the district committee would take charge of the respectable poor, and save them from the awful degradation of the workhouse. The two classes of the poor would thus be separated and submitted to a different treatment.

Allusion has been made by some of the speakers before me (and I agree with their feelings on this subject) to the objection which the clergy entertain, to the wearisome task of taking pecuniary relief to idle and improvident people. Such an occupation is not likely to tend to the spirituality of the clergy. You must not send me tramping about the parish to administer doles to those who repudiate every word I preach, if you wish me to preach you sermons which shall not speak of the weariness which comes of such hopeless ministrations.

There will, of course, be many to oppose the formation of this committee. We all know the jealousy of charitable interests. Yet the difficulty is not so great as it is supposed. It will be always possible to put the charge of the religious poor of the different religious communities in the hands of the members of the committee belonging to that community. There will then be select classes of poor who

live under the rules of their own communion, and it will be the duty of those who have care of them [to discourage hypocritical pretence of religion for purposes of obtaining relief. Then there will be the great mass of respectable indigence, which will be managed by the Committee and the Poor-law Board, which is precluded from considering any question of good or evil—(cries “No”)—I speak of the Poor Law as laid down in the original report—and will deal with the case of those who have fallen below the reach of charity.

I have but one more word to say. [Suppose we do not succeed in forming this committee, and that this movement fails? Poor-law relief is extending every year. It is growing into an imperial system of taxation. If nothing is done, the Poor Law will soon be a magnificent scheme for taking the money of those who work hard and save, and putting it into the pockets of those who are idle and thriftless. I beg to move that this resolution be adopted, and that this committee be appointed.

Sir RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, K.C.B., of the St. George's Charity Organisation Committee: I rise to second this resolution. Many present have already spoken with great ability, and there is the less need, therefore, that I should go into much detail. I have joined with much satisfaction this Society, and I feel that there is a deep debt of gratitude due to those who have worked heretofore, and brought it to its present state of organisation. Every one who looks into this subject will see how much it is to be desired that earnest workers should come forward to assist in rendering the charitable efforts now being made on behalf of the poor a blessing alike to those who give and those who receive relief. Who can see the immense mass of poverty now existing, and with which the organised institutions of the country are quite incapable of dealing effectually, without heartily desiring such combination for good as that now proposed? Some 400,000 poor have to be assisted, according to a report quoted by the Bishop of London, and so much money is given annually that there ought to be 17s. available for each person. And yet, when we see the evidence before us of continued destitution and increasing pauperism, it is clear that the one thing needed is the better organisation of charitable relief, and a more thorough combination of the lay and clerical elements. I am satisfied that the co-operation the Society has in view will never be

Sir RUTHERFORD
ALCOCK.

accomplished unless all our energies are given to it, perfectly apart from any sectarian feeling. One of the clergy here present has told us how, with the help of Dissenting brothers, he had on one occasion to lift a sheep out of a ditch to save its life; but here we have many thousands to help out of their trouble, and the work is only to be done by sinking all differences of creed and religion. It matters not with whom we work. It must be done by the cordial co-operation of the clergy and laity of all denominations. I feel a very earnest desire to take a share in this work with the Society. I am quite sure, if this principle be kept in view, that it will progress favourably and end in success, and that we shall soon be in a position to grapple with this monster problem, how to combine charitable relief with self-dependence.

The Hon. and
Rev. R. LID-
DELL.

The Hon. and Rev. ROBERT LIDDELL, Vicar of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge: In asking your kind attention to the few observations I have to make, I do so in no invidious spirit. I fully recognise the services of this Committee in their endeavours to solve one of the most difficult problems in our social condition. I thank them personally for the ready attention they have shown to any cases of emergency which I have referred to them, and I wish to give them all the assistance in my power—to ask information of them, and to give it to them, when capable of giving it, as to my own parish.

I observe the suggestions Nos. 1 and 2 are as follows: "First. That a relief committee be formed in each ecclesiastical district. The incumbent (or a layman if the incumbent prefer it) to be chairman, and the members to consist of the clergy, district visitors, and other persons who may be elected. This committee to meet at stated times for the formation of general rules, but to appoint from among its members a relief sub-committee, which shall meet three times a-week, or oftener if necessary, to discuss and deal with all cases proposed for relief in the district." "Second. That the district visitors shall in future, except in very urgent cases, on no account give, even at their own expense, any relief without the previous sanction of the relief sub-committee. In a very urgent case, the circumstances under which relief may have been given shall be reported at once to the sub-committee."

On this I wish to offer a few remarks. I feel that we are in our infancy with regard to this institution, and are,

as it were, feeling our way in it. But when I, as a parish priest of now nearly forty years' standing, am asked to subordinate to the decision of a committee such as this is proposed to be, the administration of the alms given by my congregation and communicants for the relief of the sick and needy, I feel a very great doubt how I can consent to that proposition.

I have no objection to the formation of a lay committee in my district; I would wish to be on the most friendly terms with that committee, and would give them information if they wished it. But as this is to be a lay committee, embracing, possibly, members of all other religious denominations, I think I ought to say at once that a committee such as that had better be independent of me and I of it.

I do not know whether I should be taking up too much of the time of the meeting by stating the kind of parochial organisation I have already got, but with your permission I will state what it is.

Each of my curates has a district assigned to him. He goes amongst the poor simply in his spiritual capacity. Each curate has a sister under him, and each sister three or four district visitors, who minister under their direction. Those sisters administer all temporal relief, and a record is kept of all the people visited and the nature and amount of the relief given.

That is the organisation which I have in my parish. It works so effectively that I should be very loth to make any alteration in it at present. The reasons why I should object to make any change are threefold.

First, as regards the poor. I do not wish to substitute for the quiet home relief given by the sisters the administration of a mixed lay committee, which from its system of searching investigation (though I recognise the need of it) would practically seem to the poor to be closely allied to the Poor-law relief. The best of our poor are the most retiring and the most sensitive. They would shrink from coming before such a committee, and they would rather have the services and kind offices in distress or sickness of one whom by experience they trusted and dearly loved. Moreover, we must look at this question, not only in its secular and social aspect, but also in its religious aspect. The mixed character of the committee would tend to create confusion in the minds of our poor. They would not recognise the relief as coming through the personal

sympathy of their spiritual mother the Church, acting through her own authorised members, but only as aid coming from a secular society. Their interest in their parish as a religious organisation would be weakened, and the visible bond of church unity loosened.

Secondly, as regards the sisters and the district visitors. They would not, I know, be able to be present at the consultations of the local committee, because they shrink from all publicity. They would be doubtless qualified as regarded giving information upon any specified subject, but they would decline to do so personally, and any report to or from them would have to pass through me. Neither would they or our district visitors recognise any authority in my parish but that of their own parish priest.

Thirdly, as regards my own office, I have been taught that I stand in the relation of a spiritual parent to the people of my own flock; and I cannot, I humbly think, delegate my supreme authority in my own parish to others. It is not that I want to arrogate authority to myself, but I have a conviction that a certain office has been solemnly committed to me, and I am responsible before God for the fulfilment of that office; and so I cannot consent to be otherwise than the head of my own parish. And, therefore, though I may maintain the most friendly relations with this Committee, I cannot consent that the alms of my people should be administered under the judgment of others, and not under my own judgment. I should be glad to promote the relief of the deserving poor; but to go the length of the suggestion of the second clause of these suggestions—I cannot do it. I have given simply my reasons for the declarations I have made, and I thank this meeting for their patient hearing.

MR MORRIS

Mr. MORRIS, Guardian of the Poor: I think this meeting, or this question, will not be influenced much by the last speech. (Question, question.) I have always found that clergymen have been the worst dispensers of alms. I do think that if they had a little more of the inquisitiveness of the Poor-law gentlemen it would be a great deal better for the poor at large.

CHAIRMAN: Are we not getting beyond our subject? We all hold Mr. Liddell's conscientious opinions in great respect. The more of that conscientiousness there is in a clergyman, the more he will deserve the assistance of the laity.

Hon. and Rev. R. LIDDELL: I cannot hear all the observations made at the other end of the room owing to my infirmity of deafness. I am afraid I have given some pain to the last speaker by something I have said. If I did so I wish most heartily to withdraw my words, and assure him that nothing was further from my intention than to throw any aspersion on the Guardians, who give up so much of their time for the benefit of the poor. No one will, I suppose, think that I wish to say one word against them.

Lieut.-Colonel FLETCHER, of the St. George's Charity Organisation Committee: I wish to offer a few remarks on the subject of the resolution. It seems to me very desirable that the several distinct agencies should be under the supervision of the respective clergy and of the ministers of other denominations; but that these should avail themselves to a greater extent than at present of lay agency, and, above all, recognise the great principle that those whose province it is to visit the poor should not of themselves give relief, but should submit to the direction of the district committees.

Lieut.-Colonel
FLETCHER.

I have had some opportunities, when serving on the Committee in Mount-street, of seeing the working of some of the district visitors, and can speak highly of their valuable services. Many of them are in constant communication with the Committee, and both give and receive information from them. With respect to what fell from the Rev. R. Liddell in regard to the organisation in the District of St. Paul's, I would venture to give an instance to prove that the organisation of that district, although possibly excellent in theory, is not quite perfect in practice. The case is that of a poor man who, having met with an accident, was thrown out of work. He received assistance from the St. Paul's Local Charity, and also parish relief. The case was brought before the Mount-street Committee by the St. Paul's District Charity, and, as they were averse to becoming a third channel of relief, they wrote to the Rev. R. Liddell, asking him to continue to assist the case, whilst they (the Mount-street Committee) drew the attention of the Guardians to the insufficiency of the relief afforded from the parish. Pending this decision of the Guardians, Mr. Liddell again wrote to the Committee asking for help, and consequently, much against their will, they voted a grant. Now I would venture to remark that in this case the rich district of St. Paul's should have been

able to undertake the case during the time the attention of the Guardians was being called to it, and that the Mount-street Committee should not have been asked to step in as a third source of charity. I would add that, on the representation of the Committee, the Guardians increased slightly the out-door relief. I merely mention this case to show that some more extended organisation is required to enable the several charities of the parish to work together with the best prospect of producing satisfactory results.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Liddell is under a misapprehension in thinking we are committed to interference with any existing organisation. The committee we propose to appoint is a provisional committee, for the purpose of drawing up rules to be recommended to the clergy and other charitable agencies, and when those rules are drawn, it will be entirely at their discretion to adopt them or not. If Mr. Liddell prefers his own organisation, by all means let him keep it. I will now put the resolution to the meeting. (After a show of hands.) Carried unanimously.

CHAIRMAN: The gentlemen proposed for the Committee are as follows:—

The Hon. and Rev. Robert Liddell, Vicar of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.

The Rev. G. H. Wilkinson, Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton-square.

The Rev. J. H. Hamilton, Vicar of St. Michael's, Chester-square.

The Rev. G. C. White, Vicar of St. Barnabas, Pimlico.

The Rev. G. D. W. Dickson, Incumbent of St. James-the-Less, Westminster.

The Rev. W. H. Turle, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Westminster.

The Rev. S. Martin, Minister of James-street Congregational Chapel, Westminster.

The Rev. F. Shepherd, Curate of St. Stephen's, Rochester-row.

The Rev. W. Gill, Minister of Robert-street Congregational Chapel, Grosvenor-square.

The Rev. Father Cardwell, Priest of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Chapel, Horseferry-road, Westminster.

Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN, K.C.B.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. Fremantle,

Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Fletcher,

Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. W. E. Sackville West,

Lord Edward Cavendish,

J. Osborne, Esq.,

E. M. Burden, Esq.,

G. N. Hooper, Esq.,

B. Granger, Esq., Almoner of the Society for the

Relief of Distress.

Members of the
St. George's
Charity Or-
ganisation
Committee.

In the absence of any objection I will assume that these gentlemen are appointed to the Committee, with power to add to their number.

The Rev. H
HOWARTH.

The Rev. H. HOWARTH, Rector of St. George's, Hanover-square: I would now suggest that we should offer our best

thanks to our Chairman. He is almost a household word whilst thinking of the best way of relieving the poor ; and if the two great objects can be accomplished—the first, to curb the giving of indiscriminate alms to the poor ; and the second, to establish a proper house-to-house system of district visiting—that result will be obtained which is so greatly to be desired.

Rev. W. GILL : I should much like to have the honour of seconding that vote of thanks. I am quite sure our Chairman has acted with liberality and consistency on the occasion, and deserves the thanks of all.

CHAIRMAN : Most heartily I return you my thanks for the kindness and attention you have shown me during the business of this meeting, and for the support which you have accorded to me on the occasion. I will show my sense of what is due from me by not detaining the meeting any longer.

The RESOLUTIONS as actually passed were as follows:—

1. That, notwithstanding the exertions of the clergy and others in this district, much of the charity that is administered has a pauperising effect; and many unworthy persons live in idleness, preying upon the kind-hearted, while the really deserving poor, who do not beg, are in danger of being overlooked.

2. That, in order to commence, with any hope of success, the great work of elevating the character and improving the condition of this pauperised and demoralised portion of the population, it is indispensable that the laity of every religious persuasion should come to the aid of the clergy and ministers of all denominations.

3. That a committee be appointed for the purpose of considering the arrangements under which suitable relief may be given in every case of need, consistently with the object of preventing cases of temporary destitution from becoming cases of permanent pauperism, and of rendering the poor, as far as possible, self-supporting and self-respecting, in general accordance with the suggestions which have been offered by the Committee of the Charity Organisation Society for the District of St. George, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE APPOINTED UNDER THE ABOVE RESOLUTIONS.

HAVING, at meetings held on the 18th and 25th March, and the 15th April, 1871, fully discussed the subjects referred to us in the above resolutions, we report as follows for the consideration of the Charitable Agencies working within the Poor-law Union of St. George's, Hanover-square, meaning, by the term "Charitable Agencies," all centres from which relief is given in any shape, whether such centres be Churches, Chapels, Committees, or Individuals.

No plan would be adequate to the fulfilment of the objects of the resolutions which was not sufficiently elastic to accommodate itself to the requirements of all parts of the Union, however different their circumstances might be.

The plan must be equally applicable to the whole Union.

In this view, the only indispensable arrangement is that a Council should be constituted in each of the twenty-one District Parishes of the St. George's Union* for the purpose of enabling all the Charitable Agencies concerned to meet and advise together. This might be called the "Parochial Council of Charity," and it might consist of—

Parish Council recommended.

- 1st. The Clergy and Ministers of all denominations who work over any portion of the parish ;

* The old parishes of St. George's, Hanover-square, and St. Margaret's and St. John's, Westminster, which constitute the St. George's, Hanover-square, Poor-law Union and Charity Organisation District, are now subdivided into twenty-one District Parishes, the aggregate population of which at the Census of 1861 was 155,609 souls.

2nd. The Managers of all Charitable Agencies within the same area ;

3rd. District Visitors, Sisterhoods, City Missionaries, and all persons engaged in helping the poor of the parish ; and

4th. One or more representatives of the District Charity Organisation Committee.

When the second and third classes are found too numerous for the convenient discharge of business, arrangements should be made for their being represented on the Council by selected members. Each Council should elect its own Chairman and Vice-chairman, and should appoint an Honorary Secretary to conduct the correspondence of the Council and to maintain an active personal intercourse between all who are working together for the same end.

Which would render valuable services, whether charitable organisations previously existed or not.

In parishes where charitable organisations already exist the proposed Council would in no way interfere with their plan of operations, or with the distribution of their funds.

These organisations would be worked as they are now worked, subject only to any modifications which their members might consider desirable.

The Council would simply endeavour to strengthen their hands by furnishing them with the means of intercommunication, and by bringing to their aid the benefit of an enlarged experience.

In parishes, on the other hand, where no efficient charitable organisation has as yet been established, the sphere of the operations of the Parish Council would be much more extended.

Intercommunication between charitable agencies the primary object.

The primary object of the Parish Councils would, therefore, be to furnish the means of intercommunication to the different charitable agencies, and to enable them all to maintain proper relations with the Guardians of the Poor, for which purposes there should be a due apportionment of the several classes of the poor, and a careful registration of the cases dealt with.

Completion of a thorough system of house-to-house visitation.

Whatever may be necessary for the completion of a thorough, and well-regulated, system of house-to-house visitation of the districts inhabited by the poor should be the especial care of the Parish Councils. For this purpose, the laity of all classes should be invited to offer

their services as District Visitors ; the quarters of the town inhabited by the poor should be divided into manageable sections ; and, except in very urgent cases, no relief should be given without the previous sanction of those under whom the District Visitors may be acting.

The Parish Councils would also enable persons of all classes who are interested in the improvement of the condition of the poor, to consider together the best means of making those sanitary arrangements which are an indispensable condition of that improvement, thereby bringing the whole force of the community to bear upon the due execution of the Sanitary Acts, including the reconstruction of dwellings unfit for human habitation, and other works which are beyond the power of individuals.

Sanitary arrangements.

The establishment of proper relations with the Guardians of the Poor will require the particular attention of the Parish Councils. While the cases which belong to the Poor Law should be left entirely to it, every endeavour should be made to obtain from the Guardians that adequate relief which the law directs to be given. On the other hand, charitable relief should be afforded sufficiently large to deal entirely with cases of temporary distress, and generally with cases which are either preventible or reclaimable, so that the persons assisted may be restored to a state of self-support and self-respect, and that there may be no excuse for soliciting alms from several sources at once.

Relations with Boards of Guardians,

The St. George's Charity Organisation Committee would be in constant communication with the Parochial Councils, and would afford them all the aid in its power in investigating cases, and in bringing such matters as may be desirable under the notice of the public authorities, such as the School Board, Boards of Guardians, Boards of Health, the Police, the Home Office, &c. The Organisation Committee would also deal with such cases as might be referred to them by the Parish Councils as requiring more help than the local charitable agencies could afford—cases, for instance, in which loans are required, and, under exceptional circumstances, in which grants for emigration or removal into the country are recommended.

And with the St George's Charity Organisation Committee.

While the plan we have recommended would not interfere with any existing agency for the benefit of the poor,

General results proposed to be obtained.

it would strengthen them all, and would secure as much uniformity as possible in the distribution of charitable relief. In parishes which are already well administered the new organisation would afford much friendly aid; while in those parts of the town where the poor are densely crowded, without any agency having been provided sufficient to cope with so great an evil, new forces would be brought to the rescue, representing, as we hope, all that is most business-like, influential, and benevolent in the laity of this district of the metropolis.

(Signed)

C. E. TREVELYAN (Chairman).

ROBERT LIDDELL, Vicar of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.

GEORGE HOWARD WILKINSON, Vicar of St. Peter's,
Eaton-square.

J. H. HAMILTON, Vicar of St. Michael's, Chester-square.

G. C. WHITE, Vicar of St. Barnabas, Pimlico.

W. H. TURLE, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Westminster.

G. D. W. DICKSON, Incumbent of St. James-the-Less, Westminster.

WILLIAM GILL, Minister, Congregational Chapel, Robert-street, Grosvenor-square.

WM. CARDWELL, Priest of St. Mary's, Horseferry-road, Westminster.

FREDERICK SHEPHERD, Curate of St. Stephen's, Rochester-row.

EDWARD CAVENDISH.

H. C. FLETCHER.

ARTHUR FREMANTLE.

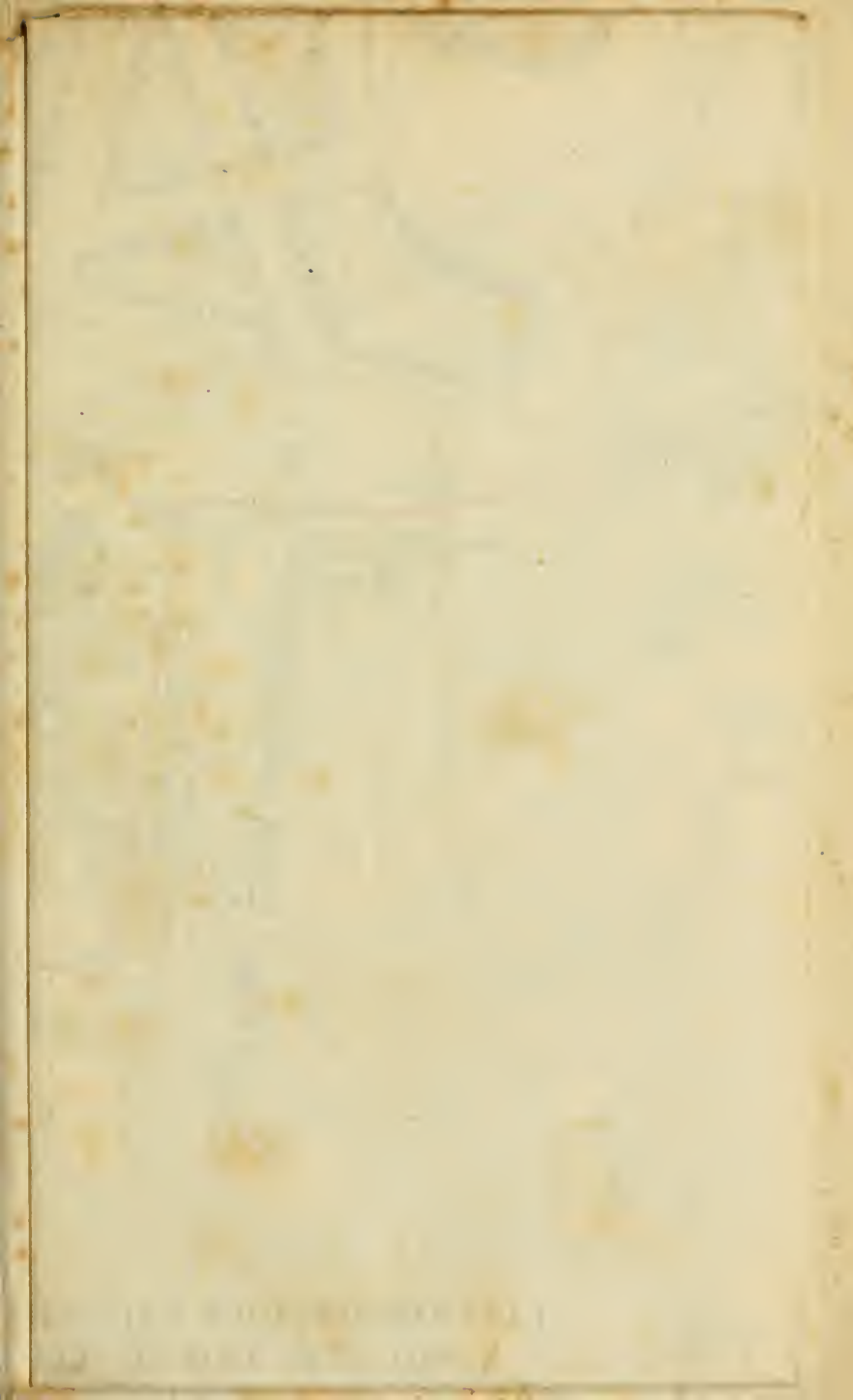
WILLIAM E. SACKVILLE WEST.

J. OSBORNE.

GEORGE NORGATE HOOPER.

EDWD. M. BURDEN.

B. GRANGER.



MAP OF THE ST. GEORGE'S UNION

SHOWING THE
ECCLESIASTICAL DISTRICTS

PRINTED BY PERMISSION
FROM BACON'S GREAT 18 SHEET MAP OF LONDON
For the
St. George's Hanover Square and Westminster Committee
for Organising Charitable Relief & Repressing Vagrancy
1871



LIST OF DISTRICT PARISHES OF ST. GEORGE'S (HANOVER SQUARE), AND ST. MARGARET'S AND ST. JOHN'S, WESTMINSTER.

Population Census 1851	Population Census 1861
St. George's (Hanover Square) 22016	
St. Margaret's - - - - - 3657	St. Andrew's - - - - - 1028
St. John's - - - - - 10461	Christchurch - - - - - 6874
Hanover Chapel - - - - - 5923	All Saint's, Knightsbridge - - 6271
St. Mark's, N. Audley Street - 4972	
St. Peter's, Eaton Square - - 14328	St. Mary's, Tenth Fields - - 6084
St. Gabriel's - - - - - 7658	St. Stephen's - - - - - 7127
St. Savour's - - - - - 8000	St. Matthew's - - - - - 7336
St. Michael's, Clerkenwell Square 10371	Holy Trinity - - - - - 6565
St. Paul's, Knightsbridge - - 9218	St. James-the-Less - - - 3727
St. Barnabas - - - - - 5000	
Holy Trinity, Knightsbridge - 1003	Total - - - - - 155609
Christchurch, May Fair.*	

* Population included in St. George's, Han. Sq.

Boundary of the three original Parishes

Boundary of the District Parishes

SCALE OF ONE STATUTE MILE

LITHOGRAPHED BY G. W. BACON & Co. 127, STRAND, LONDON.









